

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – October 31, 2021

Theme: Love: A More Excellent Way

Topic: Love your enemies.

Main Text: Luke 6:27-36; 1 Samuel 24:1-19.

Key verse: Luke 6:27 *“Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being” (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION: One of the most pivotal messages of the gospel is love. In Luke 6:27-36, Jesus Christ amplifies the message of love by commanding that love be shown to one’s enemies, not just to those who ‘deserve’ it, or those who seemingly don’t. Matthew’s account of these teachings clearly showed that this was clearly contrary to the accepted religious practice at the time. This is how Apostle Matthew captured it: *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,”* (Matthew 5:43-44).

1. **(a) Who are those, in today’s Nigeria, or the world at large, who might qualify as our enemies? (b) According to Luke 6:27-31, what are some ways we can show love to these enemies? (c) Do you think it is feasible to obey this command to love one’s enemies? Why or why not?**

The command to love one’s enemies is clearly not an easy one. In 1 Samuel 24:1-19, David had a chance to end his ordeal, but he refrained. His men probably couldn’t understand why he would let such a rare opportunity slip through his fingers. So, David did not kill king Saul when he had the chance and ended up living on the run for several more years. It is interesting to observe that Christ’s command to love one’s enemies was not to everyone. It was to *‘... you who hear:’* (Luke 6:27a). In fact, the New Living Translation renders it as *‘to you who are willing to listen...’* It takes a certain person and character to embrace this command. That is why our Lord Jesus said, *“If you love me, keep my commands...Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me... Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching”* (John 14:15, 21, 23a). Jesus Christ expects His followers to obey all His commands.

2. **(a) What was David’s reason for not seizing the ‘opportunity’ to end his troubles in the hands of king Saul? (b) What does it tell us about David and about what it takes to love one’s enemies? (c) What motivation for loving our enemies does Luke 6: 32-36 and 1 Samuel 24:12-13 offer?**

God knows that loving one’s enemies is not going to be easy. Yet, He commands it. To be able to obey that command, David had to surrender completely to God. He left it in God’s hands to judge and determine the appropriate punishment and timing of that punishment. Luke 6:27-30 gives a broad sweep of those enemy actions: *“those who hate you, ...those who curse you ...those who abuse you ...the one who strikes you ...the one who takes away your cloak ...one who takes away your goods”*. It is hard to drive through the streets of Lagos or any major city in Nigeria or in the world today, without encountering one or several of these ‘enemy’ actions. It can happen either because of one’s faith or one ethnicity or race. In fact, one can be a target of any of these enemy actions just by belonging to a different social class!

3. **Imagine yourself in David’s shoes – you have been running for your life for many years and finally can end your misery; your friends and family are urging you and even quoting Scriptures to show you that this is indeed a God-given opportunity. (a) What thoughts would you have? How would you respond? (b) When have you had such opportunity but responded like David did? What informed your decision to refrain? (c) What spiritual practices help you deepen your devotion and trust in God? How can you enhance these spiritual disciplines in your life?**

Prayer: *Dear God, grant me the grace to love my enemies, to bless those who curse me and do good to those who hate me, in obedience to You, In Jesus’ name, amen.*